DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 047 540	FL 000 017

AUTHOR	Viens, Claude P.; Wadsworth, Philip
TITLE	Foreign Language Entrance and Degree Requirements for the M.A., M.S., and Ph.D. Degrees.
INSTITUTION	Modern Language Association of America, New York, N.Y. Foreign Language Program Research Center.
SPONS AGENCY	Rockefeller Foundation, New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE	Sep 57
NOTE	12p.; Reprint from Publications of the Modern Language Association, v72 n4 pt2 p22-32 Sep 1957
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Classical Languages, College Students, *Degree Requirements, *Doctoral Degrees, Doctoral Programs, Enrollment Trends, Graduate Study, Higher Education, *Language Instruction, Language Programs, *Masters Degrees, Modern Languages, *National Surveys, School Surveys, Universities

ABSTRACT

Results of the first investigation made in 1957 by the Foreign Language Program of the Modern Language Association of America into foreign language requirements in graduate schools throughout the United States are presented in this report. Based on a questionnaire sent to 225 colleges and graduate schools, tables are furnished which illustrate requirements in graduate schools with Ph.D. programs and in schools with Master's degree programs only. Schools are listed alphabetically by state in each table. A summary of results concludes the report. (RL)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

ED0 47540

Reprinted from

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE
PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS
STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION
POSITION OR POLICY.

PMLA
PUBLICATIONS OF
THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
Issued Five Times a Year

Volume LXXXII September, 1967 Number 4, Part 2

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENTRANCE AND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE M.A., M.S., AND PH.D. DEGREES

CLAUDE P. VIENS and PHILIP WADSWORTH

Published by the MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
4 Washington Square North
New York 3, New York

FL 000 857

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENTRANCE AND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE M.A., M.S., AND PH.D. DEGREES

By Claude P. Viens and Phillip Wadsworth

A Survey Conducted for the FL Program

THIS IS THE FIRST attempt on the part of the FL Program to investigate the foreign language requirements in graduate schools throughout the United States. To keep the problem within manageable limits it was restricted to three advanced degrees, the M.A., the M.S., and the Ph.D., and to requirements in fields of study other than foreign languages. No effort was made to gain information from graduate schools which are clearly and strictly professional, such as schools of law, music, theology, medicine, and education. We used as the basis of our mailing list the USOE Circular No. 418, *Earned Degrees Conferred by Higher Educational Institutions, 1953-1954*, and sent a lengthy questionnaire to two kinds of institutions: (1) all graduate schools which granted any Ph.D. degrees, and (2) all schools listed in the Circular which granted 20 or more master's degrees. This arbitrary figure was chosen because it seemed necessary to eliminate from consideration several hundred small colleges which each year award a handful of master's degrees; most of these, presumably, have no language requirement.

The questionnaire was mailed out to the deans of 225 colleges and graduate schools, and 204 usable replies were received. The schools canvassed can be divided into four groups. First, 121 schools which have a program leading to the Ph.D. degree. These large institutions account for at least 90% of the M.A., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees granted in the United States. They are discussed in Section I of this report and the results are summarized in Table I. Second, 38 schools which award the M.A. and/or the M.S. degree and have some sort of language requirement for students in nonlanguage fields of specialization. See Section II and Table II. Third, 45 schools on our mailing list (identified in the starred footnote on p. 30) which confer the master's degree but have no language requirement either for admission to graduate study or for obtaining the degree. A number of these are teachers' colleges granting mainly the M.Ed. degree or else the M.A. or the M.S. in the field of education. Fourth, 21 institutions (identified in the starred footnote on p. 30) which failed to reply to our questionnaires and letters, presumably, in most cases, because they do not confer the degrees in question or because they have no foreign language requirements. In the following discussion the numbered paragraphs correspond to the numbered columns of Tables I and II, which in turn reflect, in condensed form, the content of the questionnaire.

I

TABLE I. *Requirements in Graduate Schools with Ph.D. Programs*

Nearly all the 121 graduate schools which grant the Ph.D. degree also grant both the M.A. and the M.S. degrees. A few of these schools have only one kind of master's degree: the M.S. in technological schools or the M.A. in smaller schools which, generally speaking, emphasize teacher training or which lack research facilities for advanced work in the sciences. Sometimes the designated type of master's degree has little apparent relation to the student's field of study; it is possible, in certain institutions, to obtain the M.A. degree in scientific or the M.S. degree in nonscientific fields. Nevertheless, if the school specializes in a limited area of advanced work—e.g., mostly science, or mostly humanities, or mostly education—this specialization is usually reflected in its language requirements.

1. *For admission to graduate standing only eleven schools reported a uniform language prerequisite for entrance in all fields of study.* In these schools the admission requirement is usually two years of college credit in a modern foreign language. The great majority of graduate schools do not have a uniform language requirement for admission. This does not always mean, of course, that the entering student will not have studied a language in college. For admission to graduate standing many schools have departmental language entrance requirements. Among the non-language departments it often happens that the department of chemistry or of English or of history (these are the recurring instances reported) will not accept a student for entrance unless he has had two or more years of foreign language work in college. Also, some departments which do not require language training for admission do give preference to students who have studied a language. No graduate department of agriculture or of education or of engineering was found which has a departmental language requirement for admission.

2. *Almost one third* (38) *of the institutions report a uniform language requirement for obtaining the M.A. degree, and about one fifth* (26) *have a similar requirement for the M.S.* Whether or not a foreign language is required at the master's level is frequently a matter for the student's department to decide. Just less than one half (54) of the schools state that a language is required in some departments, but not all. Here again, chemistry, English, and history usually require a foreign language, but almost all departments (except agriculture, education, and engineering) are sometimes mentioned as requiring a foreign language.

3. When a language is required for the master's degree, the student

is sometimes (10) obliged to choose either French or German. Spanish and Russian are occasionally cited as a third option, along with French and German. Twenty-five schools report a requirement of any one modern foreign language.

4. In schools which require a foreign language for the master's degree, whether in some or in all departments, the requirement is usually satisfied by means of a reading examination (56). Twenty-eight other schools accept language course work or undergraduate credit in lieu of a reading examination.

5. For the Ph.D. degree 74% (98) of the schools have a uniform

---

Explanation of Columns and Symbols Used in Table 1

MASTER'S DEGREE (Columns 1-4):

Column 1: *Entrance Requirement.* "U" indicates FL admission requirement for all students; "(U)" means requirement only in some fields; a dash (–) means no requirement.

Column 2: *Degree Requirement.* "U" indicates a uniform FL requirement for both M.A. and M.S.; when "M.A." or "M.S." is specified, a uniform requirement exists only for that degree; "D" means only some departments have the requirement.

Column 3: *The Language in the Uniform Degree Requirement.* "1L" means one modern foreign language is called for, with the choice left to the student; "F/G" means that the student must present either French or German. Note that where only some departments have a requirement ("D" in Col. 2) no language listing appears in Column 3.

Column 4: *Satisfying the Degree Requirement.* "R" means the student must pass a reading exam; "C" means that the student need only present a certain amount of language course work or undergraduate credit.

PH.D. DEGREE (Columns 5-10):

Column 5: *Uniformity of Degree Requirement.* "U" means all departments granting the Ph.D. degree have the same FL requirement; "D" means all departments have an FL requirement, but it is not always the same for each.

Column 6: *The Language in the Degree Requirement.* "FG" means French and German are specifically required; "F/G + 1" means French or German, plus one other language; "2L" means two unspecified languages; "alt" means (1) the uniform FL requirement is other than one of those already identified, or (2) in special cases the student may substitute another language for one of those specified in the requirement.

Column 7: *Substitution of Non-Language Work for One FL.* "s" means one of the required languages may be waived in favor of certain course work integrated with the major field of the student (e.g., statistics for a psychology major).

Column 8: *Satisfying the Degree Requirement.* "R" means the student must pass a reading exam; "d" following directly behind "R" means a dictionary is permitted for all or part of the reading exam; "C" means the institution accepts course work or undergraduate credit in foreign languages in satisfaction for the requirement, usually as an alternative to "R-E."

Column 9: *Department that Prepares the Reading Exam.* "L" means prepared by the language department; "D" means by the department of the student's major; "B" means by a special board of examiners.

Column 10: *Department that Grades the Reading Exam.* Same symbols as in Column 9.

TABLE 1

FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS IN [illegible] GRADUATE [illegible] FOR PH.D.

[illegible]

Table [illegible] (Continued)

[illegible]

Table 5 (Continued)

[illegible]

language requirement; 21.6% (36) indicate various departmental options, though all departments have some requirement; just 3.6% (3) report that only some departments have a requirement.

6. In almost one half (55) of the schools the requirement for the Ph.D. degree is a reading knowledge of French and German but, increasingly, the pattern is becoming French or German plus one other modern foreign language. Twenty-seven schools have this regulation, with a few of them specifying Russian as the other choice. There are, however, several graduate schools which require—or in which certain departments require—only one foreign language for the Ph.D. degree. The notation "a/o" (for "other") appears sometimes in Column 6 either because of a different general requirement or because of various exceptions which are sometimes allowed. A school may have a generally uniform requirement yet, in individual cases, or upon petition by the student, allow the substitution of an ancient language for a modern one, or an Oriental language for a European one, or some other European language for French or German, etc. Another alternative which exists in a few institutions is a thorough command of one foreign language in place of reading ability in two.

7. Nearly one fourth (29) of the schools reported that it is possible, in the school at large or at least in some departments, to waive the Ph.D. requirement in one foreign language and to substitute other work for it, such as additional technical training in a field allied to the student's major. The subject most commonly substituted is statistics, for students majoring in economics, education, sociology, etc. There are also instances where a strong minor, e.g., in chemistry, can replace one language for students who take their degree in such fields as agriculture, bacteriology, physics, or zoology.

8. For the Ph.D. candidate, language proficiency is verified by a reading examination in 90% (107) of the schools, only 10% (11) indicating the acceptance of course work or of undergraduate language credit, usually as an alternative.

9-10. From the many institutions where Ph.D. candidates take foreign language reading examinations we sought further information about the way in which these examinations are conducted. A few schools (indicated by question marks in Columns 9-10) have procedures which vary greatly from department to department. In nearly all schools the student is allowed to use a dictionary during all or part of the examination. In 44% (52) of these schools the selection of passages for translation is a task assigned to the language department. In another 30% (36) the selection of passages is handled by the student's own department. The remainder have other systems of selection, such as a committee with members from the two departments concerned or, in a few cases, an independent ex-

examining board not under the control of any department. The grading of the examinations is most frequently performed by the language department (88 schools, or 77%), far less often by the student's own department (8 schools, or 7%), and in some instances by an interdepartmental committee or university examining board.

Much information was collected as to when the Ph.D. language requirements had to be satisfied, but owing to its complexity it has not been tabulated in Table 1. Only a small number of universities have a deadline for fulfilling the requirement in the first of two foreign languages. In most institutions the requirement in both foreign languages must be satisfied before the student begins writing his dissertation (or before he is admitted to candidacy for the degree, or before his "preliminary" or "comprehensive" examination, or by the end of his second year of residence). The wording for this rule varies greatly from place to place, but the general principle holds true in 80% of the schools having Ph.D. programs. (This figure includes a few schools, not more than four or five, which have an earlier date for meeting the requirement, and two or three others which occasionally allow postponement of the language examinations.) But there are also twelve nonconforming institutions which permit the examinations to be taken very late in the Ph.D. candidate's studies—e.g., a year or a semester prior, or even immediately prior, to the awarding of the degree. One of the very largest universities in the United States makes only this stipulation: that the student must pass his language examinations at least seven months before he receives his degree. This means that he may complete all his course work, take his preliminary and oral examinations, write and turn in his dissertation, and then take his foreign language reading tests. Seven months later he may become a Doctor of Philosophy, without ever having read a foreign book in connection with his graduate courses or his research program.

II

Table II. *Requirements in Schools with Master's Program Only*

Section II will be devoted to 38 colleges and universities which grant the master's degree, but not the Ph.D., and which reported some kind of foreign language requirement for the M.A. and/or the M.S. degree. Nearly all these schools grant both degrees.

1. Among these schools 16% (6) report a *uniform* admission requirement. This may be a reading knowledge of one foreign language or one or two years of undergraduate credit. Fifty percent (19) of these schools require a foreign language for admission in only *some* departments. In these instances, chemistry is almost always one of the departments, but English, history, and physics also appear frequently.

TABLE II

FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS IN SCHOOLS GRANTING THE M.A. AND M.S. DEGREES BUT NOT THE PH.D.*

[The columns here correspond to Columns 1-4 in TABLE I. For the explanation of the columns and symbols see p. 26.]

1 Ent Req	2 Deg Req	3 FL	4 Rdg Test	
				ALABAMA
—	S	—	RC	Tuskegee Inst[a]
				CONNECTICUT
A	D	(L)	RC	Trinity C
				FLORIDA
(A)	S	—	R	U of Miami
				IDAHO
(A)	M/P	(L)	C	U of Idaho
				ILLINOIS
—	S	—	R	DePaul U
(A)	M/L	F/G	RC	Roosevelt U
(A)	M/P	(L)	?	Southern Illinois U
				INDIANA
(A)	S	—	R	Butler U
				KANSAS
—	S	—	R	U of Wichita
				MAINE
—	S	—	RC	U of Maine
				MICHIGAN
—	M/P	F/G	RC	U of Detroit
				MONTANA
—	S	—	RC	Montana State C
(A)	S	—	RC	Montana State U
				NEBRASKA
—	S	—	R	Creighton U
(A)	S	—	R	U of Omaha
				NEVADA
(A)	S	—	C	U of Nevada
				NEW HAMPSHIRE
A	MA	(L)	R	Dartmouth C[a]
				NEW YORK
—	S	—	R	Brooklyn C[a]
—	D	(L)	R	Canisius C
—	MA	(L)	R	City C[a]
A	D	F/G	R	Hunter C
(A)	MA	F/G	R	St. Bonaventure U
				OHIO
(A)	S	—	R	John Carroll U
(A)	S	—	?	Miami U
—	D	(L)	R	Xavier U
				OKLAHOMA
(A)	S	—	?	Phillips U
(A)	S	—	?	U of Tulsa
				PENNSYLVANIA
A	MA	F/G	RC	Bucknell U
(A)	S	—	RC	Drexel Inst of Technology[a]
A	D	F/G	?	Villanova U
				TEXAS
A	D	(L)	RC	Texas Christian U
—	MA	(L)	?	Texas C of A & I
(A)	MA	(L)	?	Trinity U
				VERMONT
(A)	M/P	(L)	RC	Middlebury C
(A)	M/P	(L)	RC	U of Vermont
				VIRGINIA
(A)	S	—	RC	C of William & Mary[a]
				WEST VIRGINIA
(A)	S	—	?	Marshall C
				WISCONSIN
—	S	—	RC	Marquette U

---

* All institutions listed in TABLE II have some form of FL requirement. [illegible]

[a] Grants only the M.S.

[b] Also has no FL requirement for some M.S. departments.

[c] Also has no FL requirement for some M.A. departments.

[d] Grants only the M.A.

SUMMARY TOTALS

For Master's Degrees (Table a—28 Institutions; Table b—121 Institutions)

	Table a		Table b	
1. FL entr. req. for all depts.	6	28	11	121
2. FL entr. req. for some depts.	10		36	
3. No FL entr. req. for any dept.	12		74	
4. Uniform FL degree req. for M.A. & M.S.	6		26	
5. Uniform FL degree req. for M.A. only	9		17	
6. Uniform FL degree req. for M.S. only	2		1	
7. FL degree req. for some depts. only	20		56	
8. FL degree req. specifies any one FL	12		25	
9. FL degree req. specifies French or German	6		40	
10. FL degree req. satisfied by reading exam	16		58	
11. FL degree req. satisfied by college credits	4		2	
12. FL degree req. satisfied by exam or credits	16		28	

For Ph.D. Degrees (Table c only—121 Institutions)

1. Uniform FL degree req. in all depts.	92	118*
2. FL degree req. in all depts. (but not always same req.)	26	
3. Req. specified in French and German	34	118
4. Req. specified in French or German, plus one other FL	17	
5. Req. in French and German, but alternatives possible	36	
6. Req. stated as two FLs, unspecified	14	
7. Req. is something other than 3-6 above	20	
8. Permit substitution of other work (e.g., statistics) for one FL	29	
9. Req. tested by reading exam (without dictionary)	15	118
10. Req. tested by reading exam (with dictionary for all or part)	92	
11. Accept course work or undergraduate credit in lieu of exam	11	
12. Reading exam prepared by FL dept.	62	118
13. Reading exam prepared by major dept. of student	14	
14. Exam prepared jointly by FL and student's major depts.	36	
15. Exam prepared by a special board	6	
16. Preparation of exam varies among depts.	12	
17. Exam graded by FL dept.	80	118
18. Exam graded by major dept. of student	6	
19. Exam graded jointly by FL and student's major depts.	15	
20. Exam graded by a special board	6	
21. Grading procedure varies, depending on dept.	11	

* These institutions reported that not all departments had the FL requirement for the Ph.D.: State U of Iowa, Harvard U (with Radcliffe C), and U of Minnesota.

2. A uniform language requirement for obtaining the M.A. degree is reported by 40% (11) of these schools, while 24% (9) require a language for the M.S. degree. Instead of a uniform requirement there is more often a departmental one. Twenty of the schools indicate that one or

most departments require language proficiency for the master's degree, but not all departments. Chemistry, again, is the department cited most frequently, but English, history, and physics are also mentioned from time to time.

3. In the 18 schools where there is a uniform requirement for one or both degrees, two thirds accept proficiency in any one modern foreign language; the other third specify that the language must be French or German. A few schools indicated that they sometimes make exceptions to the rule, allowing Spanish, Russian, or an ancient language as alternatives.

4. Where a language is required for the master's degree, two thirds of the 18 schools test proficiency by reading examination only, while the remainder accept course work or undergraduate credit in the language. Either of the two procedures may be used in a few of these schools, as well as in certain others which do not have a uniform degree requirement.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
Urbana